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Isadora D. Kunitz
174 Elmerston Road
Rochester, NY 14620

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

February 3, 2001

Michael B. Fingerhut, General Attorney
Sprint Corporation
401 9th Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20004

RE: SPEECH TO SPEECH program, outreach and funding

Dear Mr. Fingerhut:

I am writing to urge Sprint to make telephones accessible to more people with speech disabilities by establishing Speech to Speech and an effective STS outreach service. I have learned that your company will comply with FCC regulations and provide STS in New York State by March 2001.

I know that in California people with speech disabilities have dramatically improved their lives because of STS. One example I know about personally is Dr. Bob Segalman who became successful as a social advocate helping individuals with speech disabilities once he was able to use STS. In much the same way that telephone relay service helps those who are hard of hearing communicate with others through the assistance of a trained operator, the STS program helps those who are unintelligible over the phone communicate via a specially trained operator.

Beyond providing STS itself, providing outreach is an essential part of access. When people living with speech disabilities have appropriate training to use STS, they become more independent, participate in the community more, can do business transactions, get jobs, and so on. The new relay regulations require states and relay providers to contract such that relay is accessible to users with speech difficulties. If Sprint provides STS without appropriate outreach, call volumes will be extremely low. Call volumes could rise substantially with an extensive STS outreach service tailored to people with speech disabilities. Conversely, lack of provision of adequate outreach means many New York State residents will be deprived of leading fuller lives.

I strongly urge you to provide STS outreach service to New Yorkers similar to the successful programs available in California, Minnesota, and Maryland. Based on Minnesota's budgetary experience, such service may cost \$540,000 annually in New York due to the higher population. Many states have sufficient surcharge money to fund STS outreach service without difficulty. Vocational rehabilitation client services money may also be available to teach people to use STS while making them ready for jobs.

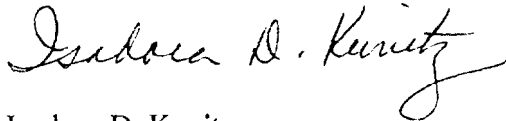
Many people with speech difficulties have other disabilities as well, such as motor handicaps making it difficult for them to write as well as speak, and therefore making it

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difficult for them to advocate for themselves. That is why it is necessary for the rest of us to insure that services like STS are provided to help these people be more independent and lead fuller lives.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to budget for an effective STS outreach service in New York State with an annual budget of about \$540,000.

Sincerely,



Isadora D. Kunitz

Cc: Disability Rights Office
Consumer Information Bureau
Federal Communications Commission, Room 6C-447
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Cc: Stacey Harwood
Policy and Compliance Analyst
DPS-Public Service Commission
Three Empire State Plaza, 3rd Floor
Albany, NY 12223-1350

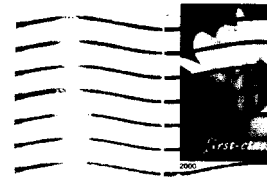
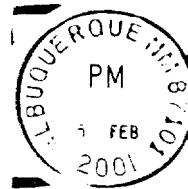
Cc: Bob Segalman, Ph.D.
Department of Rehabilitation:
Attn: Program Evaluation
2000 Evergreen Street
Sacramento, CA 95815

Stephen J & Isadora D Kunitz
174 Elmerston Rd
Rochester NY 14620-4538

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